read Paley's *Moral Philosophy* in order to 'qualify' herself to raise their children properly. Like Gregory and Percival, Rush believed that his medical education gave him privileged access to the workings of the female mind. See Rush, *Letters*, p. 436. See also his 'Thoughts on Female education, accommodated to the present state of society, manners and government, in the United States of America', in Rush, *Essays*, p. 44.

119. Rush, *Lectures on the Mind*, p. 717.
120. Rush's views of the effects of slavery were shared by contemporaries such as Thomas Jefferson and other members of the American Philosophical Society. Rush was elected vice-president of this society in 1801. See *Letters*, p.457.
121. Rush, 'An Account of the Sugar Maple Tree of the United States' in *Essays*, pp. 162–74. Jefferson was a wine expert who encouraged several experiments with American viniculture. Like Rush, he saw availability of cheap wine as the chief weapon to protect a temperate citizenry against liquor. Cf. *The Oxford Companion to Wine*, ed. Jancis Robinson, Oxford, 1994, pp. 531–2.
122. Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man*, Epistle III, line 303 in Pope, *Collected Poems*, ed. B. Dobrée, London, 1978.
123. Rush, *Lectures on the Mind*, p. 479.
124. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 479.
125. Rush, *Letters*, p. 1034.
126. Rush, *Lectures on the Mind*, p. 240. Its uses were manifold as Rush's list of the functions and origin of sympathy below illustrate.

    1.That stimuli applied to one part of the body may extend over and affect every other part. 2. To give notice of diseases in insensible parts; thus a vomiting gives us notice of a stone in the kidneys, and a pain in the shoulder indicates an affection of the liver. 3. That diseases might be diffused over the whole body and not be confined to one particular part, thus rendering it less mortal. 4. That diseases of the body generally might be cured by substances operating upon particular parts, as upon the stomach, lungs, or rectum directly. This sympathy extends to our ideas, for association is governed by the same laws as sympathy.

127. Rush, *Essays*, p. 82. This is, according to Rush, the explanation of sympathy given by the 'elegant female poet', Hannah More.
128. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 83.
129. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 83.
130. Rush, *Lectures on the Mind*, p. 116.
131. Rush, *S.I.L.*, p. 131.
132. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 132.
133. Rush, *Letters*, p. 1069.
134. Rush, *Letters*, p. 1165.
135. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 1069.
136. Rush, *Autobiography*, p. 356.

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137. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 356.
138. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 356.
139. Rush, *S.I.L.*, p. 319.
140. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 319.
141. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 320.
142. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 321.
143. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 322.
144. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 337.
145. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 336.
146. Rush, *Autobiography*, p. 108.
147. Rush, *S.I.L.*,
148. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 130.
149. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 131.
150. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 136.
151. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 142.
152. Rush, *ibid.*, pp. 149–50.
153. Rush, *Observations on the Duties of a Physician and the Methods of improving Medicine*, 2nd edn, Philadelphia and London, 1789, p. 246. Hereafter referred to as Rush, *Observations.*
154. Rush, *Observations*, p. 244.
155. Rush, *Autobiography*, p. 89.
156. Rush, *S.I.L.*, pp. 164–65.
157. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 288.
158. Rush, *Observations*, p. 260.
159. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 247.
160. Rush, *ibid.*, p. 248.

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Epilogue

Were Gregory, Percival and Rush the 'founding fathers' of modern medical ethics? The preceding account has shown that those who wish to make sense of this question have to be prepared for considerably greater complexity than commonly has been assumed. On the one hand, the three physicians inhabited a moral world profoundly different from our own; on the other hand, they clearly helped prepare for change, both socially and conceptually. This balance is nowhere more obvious than in the way they understood the status of medicine in society and politics, and this provides a suitable perspective with which to conclude.

Medicine was for all three physicians a public science *par excellence*, but in this as in other respects, Rush's more extreme views underscore the point. It is not just that he depicted medical men as ideal politicians and soldiers; they were so because: 'The science of medicine is related to everything.'[1] Gregory and Percival also saw a wider public role for the medical profession, and they – especially Percival – were exemplary public men themselves. But the central point in their activity and outlook was to cultivate a public sphere that was outside the established political process. While not entirely apolitical, they were nevertheless remarkably uninvolved in politics. In the case of Gregory, it would be difficult to imagine it otherwise, given the structure of politics in Scotland. He does not, however, seem to have had any great *interest* in politics per se, and he certainly did not attempt to relate his views on the public nature of medical science, practice and profession to politics. Percival lived much closer to major political events and was on intimate footing with many central players, ranging from radicals, such as Priestley and Wilberforce, to establishment figures of many sorts. He was

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throughout his life 'a temperate and constitutional Whig' who took 'a lively interest' in the politics of the day, especially during the French Revolution.[2] Yet he kept his distance to it all, and his active political engagement was restricted to the two issues of special concern to the Dissenters, repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts and abolition of the slave trade. The whole drift of his numerous institutional activities was to create such public spheres as the hospital, the academy, the board of public health and the 'police', all of which are characterized by being outside of politics. It is exactly in this sense that the totally independent and self-contained Manchester hospital has a claim to being one of the first *public* institutions in the proper sense.

Robert Baker has suggested that Percival was instrumental in developing the idea of the physician as a quasi-public servant. In this view, the medical profession was given various privileges by government; when the physician joined the profession, he accordingly undertook an implied obligation to the government to serve the public in return for his privileged status.[3] This is an interesting idea, but it seems to me to go against the whole tenor of Percival's life-long activity of creating and running public but firmly non-political institutions. This is underlined by what Percival actually says in the passage quoted by Baker:

> Gentlemen of the faculty of physics, by the authority of different parliamentary statutes, enjoy an exemption from serving on inquests or juries; from bearing armour; from being constables or church-wardens; and from all burdensome offices, whether leet or parochial. These privileges are founded on reasons highly honourable to medical men; and should operate as incentives to that diligent and assiduous discharge of professional duty which the legislature has generously presumed to occupy the time and to employ the talents of physicians and surgeons, in some of the most important interests of their fellow citizens.[4]

Percival is not referring to government but to Parliament. It is the 'legislature', not executive government, that grants such privileges. This was a distinction with a good deal more significance in the eighteenth century when more than ninety per cent of the business of the House of Commons was to deal with private members' bills. The point of the privileges granted was that the gentleman-commoners of the realm provided protection to certain groups in their midst, *in casu* 'Gentlemen of the faculty of physic', *against* impositions by executive government. So while physicians have public obligations, they are not to government but to – the public.

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Rush pursued the public nature of medicine with such exaggeration that he more or less obliterated the distinction between a political and a non-political public sphere exemplified by Percival. He did so by, in effect, medicalizing society as a whole, including the exercise of politics – and, of course, the moral life. For Rush, the only theory of life is a pathology that leaves no room for any moral theory proper, as should be clear from the detailed account above. Again, we can see how Rush took up a distinction from his philosophical background and emphasized one side to such an extent that the distinction is lost.

We have also seen how Gregory and Percival operated on the basis of the traditional distinction between the 'theory of morals', or pneumatology, and practical ethics, depicting the former as part of the theory of the mind and as of little relevance to the guidance of conduct provided by the latter. But for Rush, the theory of the mind became a universal key to human behaviour, and guidance became a question of medical manipulation of the mind/brain. This does leave unanswered a basic philosophical question, namely, what is the normative basis for this medical manipulation of human life? Rush explicitly rejected moral philosophy, which 'was originally introduced into Christian colleges from pagan schools, and has constantly tended to impress a belief of the independence of morals upon religion'.[5] Instead we could safely rely on religion, for the precepts of Christianity, the last component of the 'science of religion', might easily 'be made to include the whole circle of moral duties'.[6] But, needless to say, religion is itself scientific for it is part of his science of the mind, or phrenology, and a full course on this subject would include 'a course of lectures upon the evidences, doctrines, and precepts, of Christianity'. The obvious benefit of this combination was to be the knowledge gained by the students of the pathology of religious opinions held by different sects. This, he thought, would prepare the ground for the discovery of a cure for 'many of those distressing diseases of the mind which have been produced by the gloomy errors that have been supposed to belong to the christian religion'.[7]

In other words, Rush never came to grips with the basic philosophical problem. Every possible normative basis for morality, even belief in God's commandment, was treated as an object of scientific explanation rather than as task for rational justification. Like Gregory, Percival and the moral-philosophical tradition in which they all stood, he thought that we would know what we should do by finding out what we can do, but, unlike them, he

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never seemed to understand that a necessary premise for this argument was a Christian utilitarianism based upon the belief that what we can do is good because it leads to the greatest happiness and is obligatory because it is commanded by God. Nevertheless, despite the vagueness of his moral foundations, Rush clearly took them to provide a basis for medical ethics as a system of duties that expanded with the growth in science, as in Gregory, and with new institutions, as in Percival.

If Rush had not existed, he would have had to be invented in order to confound the historiographical stereotypes. Like John Witherspoon, he combined evangelical attitudes and Enlightenment ideas when he rejected the general systems of moral philosophy but accepted the practical ethics of duty. Moreover, he added to the paradox when, unlike Witherspoon, he emphasized the ability of an enlightened science of the mind to help establish a trans-confessional Christianity. Nor was this idle speculation on his part. All his life he pursued the science of the mind, and near the end he was active in the Universal Church in Philadelphia.[8] It is thus hardly surprising that he considered Anglicanism a mental disorder and a worthy object of the duties of a physician.[9]

Notes

1. Rush, *S.I.L.*, p. 295.
2. Percival, *Memoirs*, p. ccxxxvi.
3. Robert Baker, 'Deciphering Percival's Code', p. 198.
4. Percival, *Medical Ethics*, pp. 61–2.
5. Rush, *S.I.L.*, p. 174.
6. Rush, *Essays*, p. 29.
7. Rush, *S.I.L.*, p. 175.
8. In *Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal*, Douglas Sloan points to Rush's universalist conviction: 'the unity of the race in original sin ... implied a universal atonement and the unity of all mankind in salvation' (198). This was, argues Sloan, a joint product of Rush's evangelicalism and Enlightenment optimism.
9. In a letter to Richard Price he wrote that the man who would attempt to defend 'the religious establishment' of Britain would, in the United States, be 'consigned to a physician' to be cured of his error. Rush, *Letters*, p. 564. Gregory and Percival would have been less certain, and certainly more polite.

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